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99-20

January 28, 1999

For Immediate Release:

EIU ENROLLMENT DROP CONTINUES AS PLANNED

CHARLESTON -- Eastern Illinois University's deliberate effort to reduce enrollment, thus assuring its students continued accessibility to classes they need and/or want, is continuing as planned.

Tenth-day reports for Spring 1999 indicate an enrollment of 10,750 students -- a decrease of 278 from this time last year. Much of the credit for the decrease is attributed to last fall's reduction in student enrollment, coupled with the highest number of December graduates (860-plus) in Eastern's history.

This year's total (with last year's numbers in parenthesis) includes 1,794 (1,826) freshmen, 1,858 (1,929) sophomores, 2,357 (2,450) juniors and 3,281 (3,361) seniors. Graduate students number 1,460, a decrease of only two from last year's total of 1,462.

While pleased with the progress Eastern has made in reducing its enrollment -- a

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process that is expected to continue through the fall semester of 1999 -- Lou Hencken, vice president for student affairs, acknowledged that the university must not, and will not, cut back on recruitment efforts to bring highly qualified students to Eastern's campus.

"We have made a commitment to reduce enrollment, thus ensuring a manageable environment that will accommodate our students and let us offer the classes they need to graduate," he said. "However, we must remember that the number of seniors -- many of whom will be graduating in a few months -- represents over a third of our undergraduate population.

"Eastern attracts academically talented students from throughout the state and we will continue to seek those students out," Hencken added.

Spring enrollment figures also reflect another all-time high in the number of both credit hours and student FTE (full-time equivalences) through Eastern's School of Adult and Continuing Education.

"These off-campus enrollment numbers indicate a continuing need for access to EIU's off-campus programs. And as the university continues to meet the academic needs of off-campus students, enrollment figures will be maintained," said Will Hine, dean of the school.

Eastern now offers off-campus programs at 15 sites throughout the state of Illinois.

The percentage of minority students enrolled at Eastern remained the same as last spring -- 7.5 percent -- while the number of international students decreased by only one, down from 124.